

Oral Questions

the funds to compensate those affected, and I am told that the cheque-writing will start next week.

* * *

[Translation]

RAILWAYS

CN SHOPS IN MONCTON—LAY-OFFS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Last week, CN made it clear that 437 workers would have to take early retirement or be transferred, this in addition to the 225 employees who lost their jobs last fall, which gives us a total of 662. Will the Minister acknowledge that his Government has a responsibility and a duty to restore to the Moncton area the several hundred jobs that have now been lost, or is he simply going to wash his hands of the whole affair, as he is doing now?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member has a duty to ensure that the negotiations between Canadian General Electric and CNR proceed in an orderly fashion. I think the successful completion of that transaction would be good for Moncton, good for the Atlantic region. I would hope that the Hon. Member, rather than being so negative about this approach, would look at the brighter side and to the future in terms of a new manufacturing industry with tremendous spin-off benefits which will provide a long-term, stable future for the workers and for the community of Moncton.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR MINISTER TO REPRESENT NEW BRUNSWICK

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, the news about General Electric is good news, but it is just not enough. My supplementary is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

[English]

Will the Prime Minister appoint a senior Minister for New Brunswick so that the province can regain the clout it once had in Cabinet and counter the forces that seek to drain the life-blood out of Atlantic Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in response to the reference to "clout", I would just point out a fact released by Stats Can, that more jobs were created in 20 months in Atlantic Canada than were created in total between the 1980 and 1984 elections. There was no clout previously. There was a bunch of phoney people trying to spread borrowed dollars around, and people in Atlantic Canada know that is false and misleading.

[Translation]

CROWN CORPORATIONS

REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF POSSIBLE CANADAIR SALE

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Could the Minister confirm to the House that recommendations made by the Canada Development Investment Corporation argued against selling Canadair to the private sector because the offers made were inadequate? And could he give the House the assurance that the Government will not insist on privatizing Canadair against the recommendations of the CDIC which is acting as the Government's agent?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to answer this question and give my hon. colleague the assurance that the privatization process is unfolding as it should. We received the recommendation from the Minister responsible, following a recommendation by the board of directors of the CDIC. The recommendation was submitted to the privatization committee, which in turn will prepare a recommendation for submission to Cabinet.

[English]

CANADIAN OWNERSHIP ISSUE

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister's answer is totally uninformative. Could he tell the House if there is a recommendation or if there are acceptable offers? Will he assure that Canadair stays in Canadian hands, since there is a bid from Bombardier, and will he also assure the House that the House will have a chance to consider the deal before it is finalized, rather than presenting us with a *fait accompli* over the summer?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to tell my hon. colleague that there are acceptable bidders. The recommendation was a positive one. It will be studied further, presented to Cabinet, and then due process will take course.

* * *

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

SCREENING OF POTENTIAL SECURITY RISKS

Mr. Bob Pennock (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Canada Customs. At the major U.S.-Canadian border crossings, U.S. custom officials have computer terminals to assist them in screening potential security risks. In light of recent cases and given the need for increased security at all of our points of entry, does the Minister have any plans to implement some high-tech system to assist our custom officials, who are the initial contact in identifying people who are potential security risks and are trying to enter Canada?